

1034. C. W. #9
No 78 112 8th St

Papered March 14th 1826

A
Dissertation
on
Mania a Potu.
by
John H. Griffing,
of
Virginia.

10th Dec 1819

My dear Sir
I have the pleasure
to inform you that
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This disease of which I purpose treating in the following pages (in compliance with an injunction of the institution) seems not to have elicited that degree of attention we might have expected from its frequency of occurrence, and distressing nature; what may be said of it by the more ancient authors I know not, as I candidly acknowledge I am but little acquainted with their writings, but neither Cullen or Thomas mentions it; among the authorities on the subject with which I am acquainted, I will only mention Wood and Armstrong of England, the late lamented Rush, and Professor Chapman of our own Country; without however particularly considering the views which these gentlemen have taken of the disease, I shall proceed to give those which seem to me correct, without mentioning, and indeed, in many instances, without knowing, whence they were derived.

This variety of mania is one of the many, and

July 18 1841

My dear friend
I have just received your letter of the 14th inst. and am
glad to hear that you are well. I am well at present
and hope these few lines will find you the same.
I have been thinking much lately of the state of
the country and the prospects of the future. I feel
that we are in a very critical position and that
the only way to preserve our liberties and our
rights is to stand firmly by the principles of
liberty and justice for all. I hope that you
will be able to do this and that you will be
able to do it in a way that will be acceptable
to all. I am, my friend, very truly,
your friend,
Wm. Lloyd Garrison

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not the least ^{of the} distressing consequences, produced by the immoderate use of spiritous liquors; unfortunately, it is too frequent among all classes of society, though it is said to be most commonly met with among those who have once enjoyed the comforts and luxuries of life, but having been reduced to indigence or want, by impudence, or the frowns of fortune, seek relief from these cares, by resorting to this most destructive antidote. The operation of alcohol in producing the disease, is little, and perhaps not at all, understood; it would seem, however, to operate particularly on the nervous system, producing an indirect debility; that such is the effect of all articles of the class, I believe none denies; thrown into the stomach, its primary operation is to increase the energy of the nervous system, and through it, every organ of the body; this is manifested by the increased secretion which takes place from the different glands, and the invigorated manner in which

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every organ performs its functions; the stomach
 performs its office with unusual alacrity, the
 other Chyliferous viscera seem equally excited,
 the mind is exhilarated, and the whole system
 inhibits the appearance of more than ordin-
 arily good health; the patient now begins to
 imagine he has found the much wished for
 remedy, that will soothe his mental suffering,
 while it contributes to his corporeal health;
 but this delusive hope is of short duration,
 and after a greater, or less time, agreeably
 to the proportion and frequency with which
 he has taken his remedy, he begins to find
 his system as much enervated, as it was
 before exhilarated, for after repeated exhi-
 bition, the vital energies of the system
 become fatigued, or exhausted, by the con-
 tinued stimulus, are rendered insensible
 to its operation, and, as a consequence,

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Mania is induced, or in other words, Mania seems to result from the inability of the system to receive that stimulus which habit has rendered necessary to the performance of its functions, or from the accustomed stimulus being too suddenly withdrawn.

It is now we begin to observe the approach of the disease. The patient complains in the commencement of a sense of lassitude, indistinct chills, uneasiness in the head, loathing of food, and oppression about the praecordia; these symptoms are followed by a red but cool skin, which is, most commonly, covered with perspiration, white and moist tongue, pulse full and strong, but easily compressible, the stomach sometimes exceedingly irritable, the bowels obstinately constipated, face tumid and suffused, sometimes, tremours of the hands, and indeed of the whole

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body, wild eye, the countenance altogether peculiar, and the mind now begins to show marks of participation in the general disorder.

It is in this form that simple Mania a potius, most commonly, makes its appearance, but it is sometimes accompanied by inflammation of the brain or its meninges, and then assumes a somewhat different aspect, requiring, as we shall presently see, a very different mode of treatment; in this case, the pulse instead of being soft and easily compressible, becomes tense, the eye injected, the tongue parched, great thirst, with a dry and hot skin.

In either case if the proper remedies be not timely resorted to, the disease advances, and we have infuriated Madness; the patient imagines himself disturbed by the visits of some one, most commonly a near relative, from whom he apprehends much personal injury, and we hear him begging for mercy, or imploring the assistance of others. +

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In short, a thousand false impressions, or conceptions, are presented to the imagination of the patient, under the influence of which he acts, and we see him picking at motes, that seem floating in the air, or watching, with great circumspection, the motions of some hideous monster that seems approaching to devour him, and he attempts to escape, by striving to leap out at the window, concealing himself under the bed, or attempting his defence by seizing any weapon which may be at hand; indeed the variety of delusive impressions which are presented to the imagination of the patient is innumerable, but there is one which, from the frequency of its occurrence, I should perhaps mention, it is that of a web which seems floating before him, and at which he is continually grasping; he also, not unfrequently, imagines the walls of his apartment are tottering, or about to fall and crush him,

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and we find him assiduously engaged in supporting them.

These fantastic illusions seem to be the result of the very great debility I have mentioned, induced on the nervous system by the previous action of the liquor, in consequence of which, the nerves of sense, or those which receive impressions from without, acting independently of the will, (the brain being unable to exert its ordinary influence over them) transmit to the sensorium commune impressions which, in a state of health, would require for their production, the intervention of some material agent.

Nor do the nerves of sense alone suffer, nearly, or quite, all of those belonging to the viscera of the abdomen and thorax are likewise affected, this is at first manifested by a derangement of functions which ^{taken} place in

these organs; the lungs seem incapable of performing their office properly, as the blood is imperfectly decarbonized in its passage through them; this is manifested by the livid appearance of the skin, lips, tongue &c; the whole of the alimentary canal, as before remarked, becomes torpid, the liver is unable to perform its functions properly, and we have either a total suppression of bile, or, as is most commonly the case, the secretion becomes exceedingly vitiated, the capillary vessels of the surface are much affected, and a feebleness, or want of action, is manifest in the general circulation.

On examination after death, it is said, the following appearances present themselves. The stomach, and other portions of the alimentary canal, are much inflamed, the liver is variously diseased, with ulcer, tubercle, scirrhous, &c. or chronic inflammation. The contents of the thorax seem to suffer but little, though ap-

appearances of congestion are occasionally exhibited, and an effusion of water is sometimes found within its cavity, or that of the pericardium. The brain is inflamed, and the vessels belonging to its membranes much injected, with an extravasation of blood, or effusion of water, within the cranium.

These appearances are in entire accordance with the views I have taken of the disease, if, perhaps, we except the inflamed appearance of the brain, and even this, is not altogether incompatible with the pathology I have delivered, as we can readily conceive the capillary vessels might take on the inflammatory action in consequence of the difficulty the blood meets with in its passage from the arteries to the veins, these vessels being much injected. Though inflammation of the meninges of the brain does, undoubtedly, sometimes occur, yet I think it is

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but seldom, and am disposed to believe that the injection of these vessels, which has resulted entirely from the languid circulation consequent to a deficiency of nervous excitement, was mistaken for inflammation. The inflammation which takes place in the alimentary canal, I believe, occurs only in the latter stage of the disease, and may be referred to the depraved and acid secretions which are poured into it from the glands whose ducts terminate within its cavity, or to the congestion which takes place in the vena portarum, in consequence of the difficulty the blood meets with in its passage through the liver, the secretion of bile being for the most part greatly diminished, giving rise to an effort of the capillary vessels of the mucous surface to relieve themselves of the excessive accumulation of blood which necessarily takes place in them, which effort, produces inflammation.

I am led to think that in moderate relation of the muscle, and symptomatic of dysentery, this of the commences conclusion is in one deduction of justly, does
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I am led to this conclusion from the circumstances, that in inflammation of the alimentary canal when moderate, there is, most commonly, an increased exhalation of serous fluid from the capillary vessels of the mucous coat, producing frequent watery stools; and when more violent, we have those symptoms which denote its degree, from those of Dysentery, to those of Enteritis; now as neither of these conditions is observable in the commencement of the disease, I think the conclusion I have drawn fully warranted. It is in one of these ways I would explain the production of Diarrhoea, a symptom so much, and justly, dreaded in the disease.

Until lately, so little was this disease understood, that the treatment of it may be said to have been entirely empirical. Not many years since the practice of trusting the cure almost exclusively to emetics, was introduced

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by Dr. Klapp, a distinguished Physician of this City, and such, I am told by the Physicians of the Almshouse, was his confidence in the remedy, that he administered it, without discrimination, in almost every stage of the malady, but, as his patients were frequently known to expire while under its operation, experience soon corrected the fatal error, and the remedy was abandoned by a majority of the Faculty as, atleast, always hazardous, if not decidedly injurious; others, however, believing it useful under certain restrictions, retained it in practice, and among these I may mention Professor Chapman, who, however, tells us it should be used with much caution, and thinks it only serviceable in awakening the susceptibility of the system to the operation of other remedies; yet there are not wanting those who make a more extensive application of the remedy, and contend that its operation is not only safe, but highly efficacious;

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but as I shall have occasion hereafter to point out, more particularly, its application to this disease, it is unnecessary that I should say more of it at present.

During the last spring, the disease having prevailed to a great extent, the cells of the Almshouse were crowded with persons labouring under it, in consequence of which, I had an opportunity of witnessing a great number of cases, and observing the efficacy of the practice instituted in them, which, if not dictated by the same pathological views I have delivered of the disease, was exactly such as those views would lead us to adopt: without, therefore, further noticing the practice generally recommended by practitioners, than to say it consists chiefly in the free administration of stimulants, I shall proceed to detail as briefly as possible, the practice which, from its success

in numerous instances, and the pathological views I entertain of the disease, I should be disposed to pursue.

From the pathology I have delivered, the indications of cure become evident; they are to support the exhausted energies of the system, while we endeavour to quiet mental excitement, and remove the functional disturbance of the viscera, which, if left to itself, would be apt to terminate in organic derangement, and over organic derangement, I believe, all parties admit we have very little control.

Though these indications are to be kept constantly in view, yet it must not be inferred that we are necessarily to begin our treatment with the exhibition of stimulants, on the contrary, I think they will seldom be required in the commencement, and should, if possible, be avoided, as they only tend to perpetuate the

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oil, which it is our object to remedy; it is true temporary relief may, sometimes, be obtained by their administration, but on withholding the stimulants a relapse ensues. In the commencement of an attack, our attention should be more particularly directed to the two latter indications; namely, the allaying of mental excitement, and the restoration of the secretions; these indications are best fulfilled by administering, in the first place, an emetic; this should be in a full dose, and judiciously selected, the sulphate of Zinc, or Spicaevanha, ought to be preferred to Tart. ant.; as the latter is apt to induce diarrhoea, a symptom, nearly, always fatal in the disease. Of all other remedies, Spicaevanha seems ~~seems~~ best suited to the case, though it is surprising to what an extent it may, sometimes, be exhibited without producing any effect; I have known ʒi

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given, which not producing vomiting, the same quantity, with the addition of gr.ij of Tartar Emetic, was repeated with no better success; these cases, however, are of rare occurrence, and a much more moderate dose will generally be found to answer the purpose; the emetic clears the stomach of any crudities that may exist there, awakens susceptibility, produces a strong revolutionary impression on the system generally, and prepares the way for other remedies; previous to the exhibition of the emetic, cups should be applied to the head, and if those symptoms exist which I have mentioned as indicating inflammation of the brain, in addition to this, general bleeding will become necessary, after which, the head should be shaved, and a blister so applied as to cover the whole of it; this is a remedy much relied on by Dr Parrish of this City, and one which he thinks superior to every thing else in

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quitting mental excitement, and procuring sleep.

In this opinion, the respectable authority just quoted, is supported by the testimony of many of our most able practitioners, among whom, I may mention Professor Chapman, and the physicians of the Almshouse, whose experience is ample. But here we have to lament the contrary opinion of one, who is justly ranked among the highest authorities of Europe, (Dr Armstrong), who contends that they are not only useless, but highly mischievous, in every stage and modification of the disease; he asserts that they "increase nervous irritation and fever, make the patient more restless and watchful, and thus exhaust his strength. Nothing has more retarded the progress of medical science than the contradictory opinions advanced by men of equal weight of authority, who, in spite of their high attainments, and elevated minds, cannot divest

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themselves of those prejudices in favour of a favourite theory, which so far perverts the understanding as to induce them, from the same concurrence of circumstances, to arrive at conclusions directly opposite. These remarks may not be strictly applicable here, yet we are too often forced to resort to some such expedient in order to reconcile the difference of opinion among those who profess to give us the result of their experience only. From what I have seen, I would not advise the applications of blisters until proper evacuations had been resorted to, but these being premised, I have seen them frequently used, and as I think, with very great advantage.

After the operation of the emetic, the patient should be purged with senna tea, or some other mild cathartic, after which, we must proceed to administer calomel and opium,

with the double object of restoring the secretions, and composing to sleep; it is of the utmost consequence that sleep be procured, as a cure is never effected until it is induced, nor is it of less importance that the secretions be restored; to accomplish these objects we may commence by administering $\frac{ij}{ss}$ of Calomel with the same quantity of Opium every hour or two, increasing, or diminishing, the dose, to suit the circumstances of the case; if the skin be dry and hot, the addition of Spicacuanha will be found of much service in restoring the determination to the surface. In this way we direct the cure, occasionally interposing a mild cathartic to carry off the depraved secretions, until a remission of the disease takes place, or the mouth becomes affected by the mercury; should this latter condition obtain

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before the disease is arrested, we must omit the calomel, and direct a *asafoetida* mixture, laudanum with spirits of Turpentine, or much julep, each of which will, occasionally, be found of much benefit; in the mean time, the system, should it become so much prostrated as to require it, must be supported by the liberal administration of wine whey, volatile julep, Brandy punch &c. as an auxiliary measure, the room must be kept dark, free from noise, and every measure calculated to contribute to the quietude of the patient should be strictly attended to.

After the administration of Calomel and opium for a few days we, most commonly, have the satisfaction to witness the approaching convalescence of our patients, the Tongue becomes clean, the skin covered with a healthy perspiration, the constipation of the bowels

disappear, and the patient now begins to converse rationally; but this is not always the happy issue of the disease, for, after continuing some time, it is apt to assume the typhoid character, which is marked by a dry and incrusted tongue, wild eye, contracted pupil, low muttering delirium &c; it is now that stimulants are more imperiously demanded, and those of the most active kind should be liberally administered, such as Volatile alkali, camphor, musk, ^{or} juleps strong Brandy toddy, Tincture of ^{or} Kopsa &c, while at the same time, we continue the use of Calomel, Ipecacuanha and opium.

There is one other remedy which has been much extolled by several European writers, and particularly by Dr Armstrong in his valuable work on Typhus Fever; I allude to the Cold bath; Dr Armstrong only used it

in the corner who seemed young before taking his life and of supporting efficient reading and understanding it may be regarded to the patients skin, and get it well and proceed use necessary occasional of a suspicion the tepid the same

in the commencement of the disease, on patients who seemed to have much constitutional vigour, giving before, and after it, some warm stimulating liquor, and causing the skin to be well dried and rubbed with warm flannel, "by way of supporting the vis a vita, and insuring sufficient reaction". Administered in this way, and under these circumstances, he thinks it may be resorted to, with safety, without regard to the condition of the surface, as the patients on whom he used it had a cool skin, and were covered with perspiration, yet it was found to quiet mental excitement, and procure sleep, after which, nothing more was necessary to complete the cure than an occasional opiate and aperient. In all cases of a suspicious nature, Dr Armstrong prefers the tepid affusion, though he found that the same beneficial results were not derived

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from its use, as he was compelled to administer purgatives and opium, or opium and calomel, to insure recovery.

Of the tepid affusion I can say nothing myself, having never seen it employed, but in the commencement of the disease, I have known an emetic and the cold bath entirely remove it.

In the treatment of this complaint, as in every other, much will depend on a well regulated diet; it should consist of those articles which are most nutritious, while at the same time they are easily digestible, such as sago, arrowroot &c, to which, if necessary, wine, or even brandy, may be added. When the patient becomes convalescent, the use of malt liquors and a nutritious diet is, in most cases, all that will be required, but we must still watch with

care the condition of the patient, as he is often disturbed with morbid vigilance and other unpleasant symptoms; these, should they occur, must be relieved by the administration of cordials, such as have been repeatedly enumerated in the course of this treatise, and need not be again repeated, in addition to which, however, I will mention that Hoffmann's anodyne drops are, occasionally, found of much service in relieving the irritability of the nervous system.

What shall I say of the Diarrhoea which, sometimes, occurs in the advanced stage of the disease? acting under the conviction that it is produced in the manner I have supposed, I think we can do nothing better than continue the practice which has been recommended in the disease throughout, and, indeed, if my views be correct, the

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course advised is eminently calculated to prevent its occurrence; nor did it take place in a single instance at the Alma House during the last spring and summer, where this practice was pursued; but that it does occasionally occur, let the practice instituted be what it may, there can be no doubt, and this too, at a stage of the disease when the proper remedies to relieve the inflammatory action of the intestines cannot be resorted to, the system being already completely prostrated, and, in spite of all our exertions, the patient sinks to the Tomb, the victim of his own insatiable appetite. Might not cold water thrown up the rectum, prove useful at this crisis?

I have now detailed the practice pursued in the Alma House in a disease which, until lately, was more dreaded than any other,

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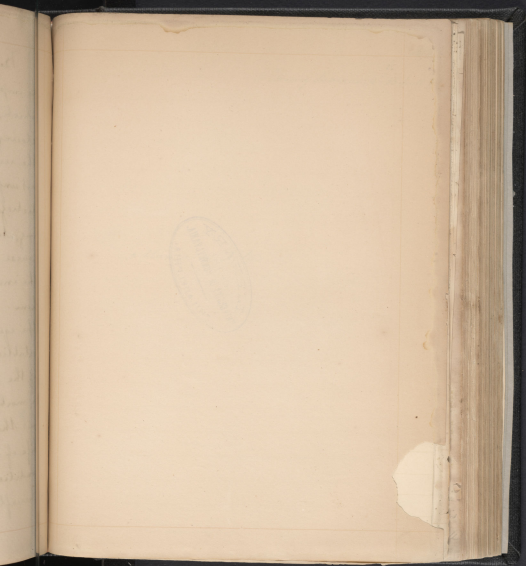
of an acute form, with which they were forced to contend, but, under the treatment I have recommended, it has become comparatively manageable. From the first of May till the twenty-second of August, sixty cases were admitted into this institution, more than two thirds of which were treated with calomel and opium, and among these there were seventeen deaths, of the remaining third, who ~~were~~ were treated more on the stimulating plan, with a sassa-fatida Mixture, Thebaic Tincture, combined with oil of Turpentine, Porter &c, ten died.

From this comparison it will be seen that the alterative course proved much the most successful; indeed, when we recollect that many of the cases were complicated with other diseases, and others brought to the House in articulo mortis, it proved more successful than could have been expected.

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Before closing this treatise, it may not be improper to mention a circumstance which, sometimes, occurs in the last or closing stage of the disease; I allude to the recovery of the mental faculties, when, not unfrequently, a scene of indescribable distress is exhibited, the patient becoming, too late, convinced of the improper course he has pursued through life, and the inevitable destiny which now awaits him. It would seem that in this case, the equilibrium of excitement is so far established between the different systems of the body, as to relieve the inordinate or morbid action of the brain, and permit the unfortunate sufferer, to close a life of misery and wretchedness, in a condition, atleast, to hope for a happier hereafter.

Before closing this letter, it may not
be improper to mention a circumstance
which sometimes occurs in the last or
closing stage of the disease; I allude to
the recovery of the mental faculties, and
not infrequently, a sense of indestructible
happiness is exhibited, the patient becomes
young, cheerful, and vigorous of the corporeal
powers he has passed through life, and
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Dec 27 -

R. Henry Thomas (N^o 55 South 7th)

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